

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0202

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, EEWT, PFOR, SCUL, BU

SUBJECT: BULGARIA -- NEXT STEPS: A GOB CONCESSION

REF: A) STATE 018359; B) STATE 020127; C) SOFIA 0018

1. YESTERDAY JAN 30 I HAD A TOUR D'HORIZON WITH AVRAMOV
(HEAD OF AMERICAS DEPARTMENT) IN WHICH TRADE BILL WAS TOUCHED
ON ONLY VERY LIGHTLY. HE ASKED ABOUT THE DRAFT AGREEMENTS
THAT GOB HAD GIVEN US IN THE
COURSE OF LAST YEAR AND, AMAZING-
LY, SUGGESTED THAT WE SINGLE OUT A CULTURAL AGREEMENT FOR
EARLY ACTION. AS DEPT IS AWARE, CULTURAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN
AT BOTTOM OF BULBRIAN PRIORITIES, AND THEY HAD ACCEPTED ITS
INCLUSION WITH TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT ONLY AFTER
WE HAD SAID THAT WE REGARDED THE LATTER FIELDS AS
PART OF A LARGER FRAMEWORK WHICH WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE
CULTURAL EXCHANGES. NOW APPARENTLY THE GOB IS PREPARED
TO GO AHEAD WITH A CULTURAL AGREEMENT ALONE, AND AVRAMOV
EXPLAINED THIS BY SAYING THAT IN ABSENCE OF SUCH AGREE-
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MENT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR GOB TO BUDGET FOR WHAT IT

WOULD NEED TO DO TO FACILITATE AMERICAN PRESENTATIONS
AND OTHER CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN BULGARIA.

2. PERHAPS I AM MISREADING WHAT IS BETWEEN THE LINES OF
REFTELS A AND B (NOTAL), BUT I HOPE THEY WERE NOT MEANT
TO CARRY THE IMPLICATION THAT BECAUSE WE ARE UNABLE TO

GIVE MFN TO THE USSR AT THIS TIME, WE MUST NOW GO INTO
SOME KIND OF HOLDING PATTERN PENDING A GENERAL REASSESS-
MENT BEFORE WE CAN DO THE NORMAL THINGS WITH BULGARIA
WHICH ARE NOT CONNECTED WITH MFN. REF A INFORMED
US IN ITS LAST PARAGRAPH THAT "CLIMATE FOR EE VISITS BY
CABINET OFFICERS IS UNCERTAIN" AND REF B REFERRED TO
"POSSIBLE US PUBLIC REAPPRAISEL OF EAST-WEST TRADE
RESULTING FROM THE TRADE ACT" AS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY
THE US-BULGARIAN JOINT ECONOMIC COUNCIL, A NON-GOVERNMENTAL
BODY, CAN HAVE ITS FIRST MEETING ONLY ONE YEAR AFTER SIGNA-
TURE OF THE AGREEMENT LAST SEPTEMBER.

3. IN CONSIDERING NEXT STEPS IN LIGHT OF CHANGED CIRCUM-
STANCES SINCE REF C WAS SENT, DEPT SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
THAT CLIMATE IS NOT AT ALL UNCERTAIN HERE FOR THE KIND OF
VISIT BY CABINET OFFICER THAT WE HAVE SUGGESTED. ON
THE CONTRARY, SUCH A VISIT WOULD BE WELCOMED PRECISELY
BECAUSE THE GOB (AND PROBABLY THE USSR, TOO) WOULD NOT
WANT THE MFN IMBROGLIO TO SLOW THE PACE OF NORMALIZA-
TION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH BULGARIA. SIMILARLY, THERE
IS NO COOLING HERE IN THE DESIRE TO MOVE AHEAD ON TRADE
EVEN WITHOUT MFN, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY KEEN BULGARIAN
INTEREST IN MAJOR US PARTICIPATION AT PLOVDIV, HOSPI-
TABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD ONGOING PROGRAMS FOR SEMINARS
AND OTHER PROMOTION ACTIVITIES, AND CONTINUING INTEREST
IN ESTABLISHMENT TRADE OFFICES. GOB HAS TAKEN SPECIAL
PAINS TO AVOID OFFENDING US IN CONNECTION WITH ITS
RECENT PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE TRADE LEGISLATION. AND
NOW THE WILLINGNESS TO MOVE ONTO CULTURAL AGREEMENT INDI-
CATES THAT GOB IS MAKING YET ANOTHER STEP IN OUR DIREC-
TION.

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